

Message Text

SECRET

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46

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
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O 181150Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 901

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENNA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST IMMEDIATE

DIA IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR IMMEDIATE

CINCUSNSXEUR IMMEDIATE

USAREUR IMMEDIATE

CINCUSAFE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T BELGRADE 5171

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: YO PINT PFOR PGOV MOPS

SUBJECT: RUMOR OF TITO ILLNESS, WARSAW PACT REACTION PLANNING

REF: BELGRADE 5164 EXDIS

1. AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES AND CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE DEFLATED CURRENT RUMOR OF TITO ILLNESS. STATE PRESIDENCY PROTOCOL CHIEF MIRKO MILUTINOVIC TOLD AMBASSADOR EVENING OCT 17 THAT WHILE TITO IS HAVING CONTINUING TROUBLE WITH SCIATICA, HIS HEALTH IS FINE OTHERWISE. FSFA PRESS SPOKESMAN MILAN ZUPAN TOOK INITIATIVE TO TELL DCM SAME EVENING THAT, IN RESPONSE TO REUTERS INQUIRY ABOUT TITO HEALTH RUMOR EMANATING FROM VIENNA, HE HAD SAID TITO'S HEALTH FINE.

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2. MEDIA HIGHLIGHTING FACT TITO PRESIDED OVER 10TH SESSION

STATE PRESIDENCY HELD IN BELGRADE OCT 17.

3. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE SCIATICA IS A PROBLEM. DANISH AMBASSADOR IN BELGRADE SAYS YUGOSLAVS HAVE ASKED THAT STAIR CLIMBING BE KEPT TO MINIMUM DURING TITO VISIT THERE BECAUSE HE HAS TROUBLE WITH HIS HIP. HE HAS BEEN OBSERVED TO LIMP, PRESUMABLY FOR THE SAME REASON, AND IT IS THESE OBSERVATIONS WHICH LIKELY GIVE RISE TO SPECULATION ABOUT A STROKE.

4. AS FOR THE VIENNA RUMORS, CONSENSUS HERE AMONG KNOWLEDGEABLE TITO AND AUSTRIA WATCHERS IS THAT THESE RECURRING REPORTS FROM VIENNA VERY WELL MAY BE THE RESULT OF DISINFORMATION. ONE AMBASSADOR CLAIMS TO HAVE INDICATIONS THAT IT IS THE SOVIETS OR THE BULGARIANS. ANOTHER OBSERVATION GIVEN CURRENCY HERE IS THAT AUSTRIANS ARE PARTICULARLY NERVOUS BECAUSE OF THEIR FEAR THEY MAY BE ASKED TO GIVE RIGHT OF PASSAGE TO SOVIET FORCES IN EVENT OF DESTABILIZED YUGOSLAVIA AFTER TITO.

5. IN ANY EVENT, WHAT WE SEEM TO HAVE HERE IS YET ANOTHER RUMOR WHICH, BECAUSE OF ITS ALLEGED SOURCE AND HOW IT WAS SPREAD, HAS HAD TO BE ADDRESSED AND MANAGED. AS LONG AS TITO IS AROUND THIS KIND OF THING WILL CONTINUE, AND ABOUT ALL WE CAN HOPE TO DO IS TRY TO DAMPEN THE ENTHUSIASM FOR SUCH THINGS ON THE PART OF SOME OF OUR MORE VOCIFEROUS (AND LESS RESPONSIBLE) COLLEAGUES.

6. BELGRADE MILITARY INDICATORS, MIXED BUT PRIMARILY NEGATIVE, ARE BEING REPORTED DAO CHANNEL.
TOON

SECRET

NNN

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